

CHERRY CHOCOLATE CAKE

3 cups fresh or frozen pitted sour cherries (1 lb.)

2/3 cup granulated sugar

1 t. almond extract

1 c. boiling water

3/4 c. cocoa powder

1 t. vanilla

2 c. flour

1 1/4 t. baking soda

1/2 t. salt

1 1/4 c. light brown sugar, packed

2 sticks (1 cup) butter

4 large eggs

1 c. semisweet chocolate chips

Confectioner's sugar, to finish

Mix cherries with sugar and almond extract and let stand 2 hours. Drain cherries, reserving 1/2 cup juice.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Butter and flour a 9X13 inch baking pan. Whisk hot water and cocoa together until smooth, then whisk in cherry juice and vanilla.

Sift together flour, baking soda and salt in another bowl.

Cream butter and brown sugar in the large bowl of an electric mixer until fluffy. Add eggs one at a time, beating well to incorporate after each addition. Add flour mixture and cocoa mixture alternately in batches at low speed until blended.

Fold in cherries and chocolate chips and pour batter into pan. Bake until a wooden pick inserted into the center comes out clean, about 35-40 minutes. Cool completely, sprinkle with confectioner's sugar, and cut into squares.

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